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FIRE PREVENTION FOR FARM HOMES

Eight causes of fires in homes are responsible for 85 percent of the fire losses in farm dwellings. They are: Defective chimneys and flues; sparks on combustible roofs; lightning; spontaneous combustion; careless use of matches and smoking; careless use of kerosene and gasoline; defective and improperly installed stoves and furnaces; faulty wiring and wrong use of electric appliances.

Going through the house room by room, some of the points to note are:

In the living room: Is the radio antenna grounded? Metal ash trays for smokers? A metal waste-basket? A fireplace screen?

In the kitchen: Is the coal or wood range set away from the wall, on a metal mat extending a foot in front of it? Is the wall behind it and the nearby woodwork protected by metal? Does the stovepipe fit snugly into the chimney flue? Does it pass through a partition? If this is necessary, is the partition protected by a double metal "thimble"? Where is the kerosene or gasoline stored if either is used for cooking? Where are the matches kept? Where are burnt matches put?

In the bedrooms: Chief fire dangers are from cigarettes and matches, electric heaters and curling irons, and other such electric appliances. If kerosene lamps or candlesticks are used, they should have wide bases and guarded flames.

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In the basement: The furnace room should be as nearly fireproof as possible. The furnace should rest on a concrete or brick foundation set away from the walls and at least 18 inches from any woodwork. Ceiling joists should be protected with asbestos above the furnace. Pipes and joints should be tight. The chimney should start the season clean of soot. Hot ashes belong in metal containers. Rubbish should not be allowed to accumulate in a basement but should be disposed of regularly.

In closets, attics, and storerooms: Electric cords should not be hung over nails or sharp edges that may wear through the insulation. An open light, such as a candle or a kerosene lamp, should never be carried into a closet. Using a flashlight is a better practice. The attic gets hot in summer and should be regularly ventilated. Material liable to spontaneous combustion should not be stored there and forgotten. Space should be left around the chimney. Articles stored too near may some day catch fire from a defective chimney.

Family habits likely to start fires should be analyzed and corrected. For example, using kerosene to start the kitchen fire; leaving an electric iron attached to the source of current when called to the telephone; putting oily or paint-soaked rags carelessly in the cellar instead of in closed metal containers.

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